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SUBJECT: KOSOVO: AGIM CEKU APPROVED AS NEW PRIME MINISTER;
KOLE BERISHA AS NEW ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT

Sensitive but unclassified, please protect accordingly.

11. (U) The Kosovo Assembly approved outgoing Kosovo Protection Corps commander General Agim Ceku as Kosovo's new Prime Minister and his slate of ministers with 65 votes in favor; 33 opposed and 5 abstentions. The vote followed along party lines with coalition members Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and the "6 plus" group of non-Serb minority parties delivering the votes of their members present for the vote, while the opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) and ORA Reform Party voted against. Abstaining were assembly members from the newly-formed Group for Integration composed of four representatives from ethnic minorities and two from fringe ethnic Albanian political parties.

12. (SBU) Ceku was magnanimous in his acceptance speech. He addressed Kosovo Serbs in Serbian, the first time a Kosovo prime minister has ever spoken in Serbian from the rostrum of the Kosovo Assembly. He guaranteed Kosovo Serbs their equal place and rights in Kosovo society and institutions. Ceku met yesterday with Serbian List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) head Oliver Ivanovic to discuss SLKM rejoining the government and will continue to reach out to ordinary Kosovo Serb as well as their political leaders.

13. (SBU) In an overwhelming vote earlier in the day, the Assembly voted 100 in favor, two opposed and three abstentions for new Assembly president Kole Berisha, who replaces Nexhat Daci. The opposition PDK and ORA parties joined the coalition partners in the vote, a clear slap at the demoted Daci, who was known for his quick temper and autocratic methods while Assembly president.

14. (SBU) The opposition took full advantage of Berisha's more tolerant and democratic bent, spending several hours of debate excoriating the work of the government of outgoing PM Bajram Kosumi and, in the case of the PDK, the decision of Ceku to enter the political fray with so few changes in his cabinet.
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